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ABSTRACT

Designed for elementary school teachers, this publication treats various aspects of publishing young student-authors' writing. Activities are as follows: (1) proofreading (children should proofread first by themselves); (2) pagination (let children decide how to break up the text); (3) placement of text (on alternate pages, for example, or perhaps a more experimental layout for older children); (4) hand lettering (encouraging youngsters to hand letter the texts gives them a real reason for developing attractive handwriting); (5) illustrations (artwork can be drawings, collage, or photographs), (6) dedication and information about the author (professionally published books can serve as models); (7) cover (should invite attention--try to coordinate text theme and design colors with the cover); (8) publishing equipment (several classrooms could share equipment and drawing implements to cut costs); (9) postpublishing (a book launching can be held with parents and friends invited to the classroom); (10) publication schedule (the first book could be published quickly and after that the process might become more selective); and (11) publication of big books (a cooperative class effort where the texts begin as wall stories with the teacher acting as scribe). The document points out that children should be involved at all stages of publication. (NKA)

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PEN

FROM THE PRIMARY ENGLISH TEACHING ASSOCIATION

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CLASSROOM PUBLISHING

Lorraine Wilson

So you have children who are ready to publish something which they have written. This means that the children want to publish; they have tried their pieces of writing on their friends or intended audience and listened to their feedback; they have probably made some changes to their early drafts; they have done some proofreading of their last drafts, and now these drafts have had final proofreading completed by you, their teacher.

A note on proofreading

The children are the first proofreaders of their writing. They might follow these instructions.

1. Underline the words you think are not quite right.
2. Touch the part of the word you are concerned about.
3. Write the word again once or twice in different ways.
4. Ask yourself, 'Which way looks right?'

After the children have done this, they bring their proofreading to you. You look at their proofreading strategies, discuss them and, if need be, write the correct form of those words they have attempted unsuccessfully.

Remember — children can only take in so much when you speak with them at proofreading time. To discuss thirty or forty errors will simply overload and confuse any child. A reasonable target for young writers is to identify and attempt to self-correct three to five items per piece of writing.

If there are still other items of spelling, punctuation or capitalisation to be corrected, and the child is to hand letter the text into a book, it will be necessary for you to write all the other corrections on the draft. It is thus a good idea to have a proofreader's tray on you desk. After you have discussed a child's proofreading, the draft goes into this tray. When you have time (perhaps when the children have all gone home), you check that all surface features of the writing are correct. Only then is the draft given back to the child for publishing.

Once the piece of writing has been completely proofread, the writer has many publishing decisions to make. Of course, how much children know about publishing will depend upon their previous publishing experiences, their participation in the group publishing of class big books and their exposure to commercial publications.

Pagination

The author of a picture story book has to decide how to break up the text. I am finding that six-year-old children are able to decide how much print they want on each page of their books and to mark their drafts accordingly. For example:

> On Saturday my grandmother came to stay./ We met her at the airport. There were Mum and Dad, Aunty Marg, Daniel and me./ Gran is going to stay for one whole month./ I've moved into Daniel's room....

Do encourage children to be responsible for marking their own page breaks. When children are uncertain how to do this, include them in an activity with a class wall story and work together to mark the page breaks. Talk about how much print lends itself to one interesting illustration, and make sure the children realise there does not have to be just one sentence per page.

Placement of text

Will the text be entered on each page or on alternate pages? Once this is decided, page numbers can be written on the draft. With text entered on alternate pages, our example would look like this.

1. On Saturday my grandmother came to stay./
3. We met her at the airport. There were Mum and Dad, Aunty Marg, Daniel and me./ 5. Gran is going to stay for one whole month./ 7. I've moved into Daniel's room....

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Next, the children (maybe with your help) can estimate how many sheets of paper will be needed to make the book. (1 sheet = 2 pages, and so 10 pages = 5 sheets.) Allow an extra sheet for the title page. For younger children, staple the pages together at this point to prevent the illustrations and text disappearing into the margin behind the staples. Children then number the pages, keeping odd numbers on the right hand side as in commercial publications.

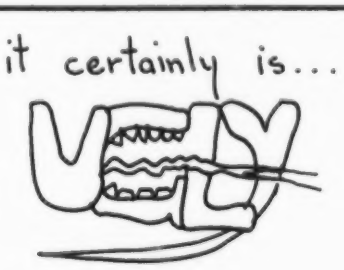
The children now have the correct number of pages for their texts and know which piece of text is going on which page. Older children may like to experiment with the layout of the text. Rather than entering it across the width of the page, they might place it in blocks or columns, or they might vary the direction of the print.

Hand lettering

Will the book be hand lettered or typed? Encouraging children to hand letter their texts rather than having them typed gives them a real reason for developing attractive handwriting or hand lettering. In the class handwriting program, children should come to know that we vary the care we take with our handwriting according to the purpose and intended audience. Entering text in a book which is to be seen and read by many provides children with a genuine purpose to write neatly and legibly. Many of the children with whom I work regularly have developed several attractive lettering styles without any formal lessons.

Of course, when children write very long stories or novels, it would be a waste of their time to require the text to be hand lettered.

Some infant teachers have co-opted an upper grade to assist with the hand lettering of their young pupils' books. These teachers do final proofreading, mark the page breaks and send the drafts and stapled pages to the upper grade. The older children return the books all ready for the authors to do their illustrations. This strategy provides an opportunity for further hand lettering practice for the older children.

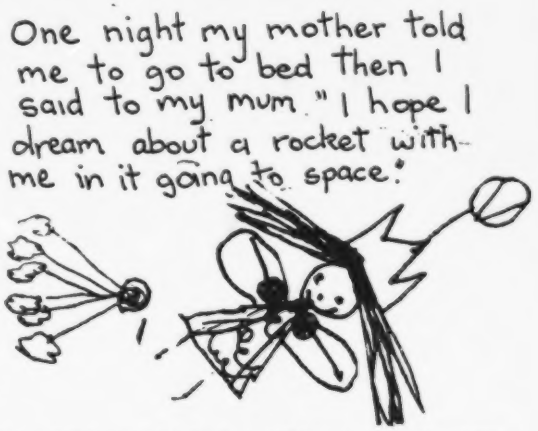


To give the children some ideas for developing their own lettering styles, you can have lettering books available in the publishing area for them to borrow. You might display a variety of alphabet styles around the classroom too. When you are entering text in a class publishing project, you can try out different lettering styles yourself, varying the ways you set out the text and sometimes highlighting key words. All of this will help children find models on which to base their own experiments in lettering.

Illustrations

A further decision must be made about the style of artwork. Will the illustrations be drawn? Will collage or photographs be used? Perhaps the author will make some pop-up artwork.

As part of the class literature program, take time to discuss the work of well-known illustrators. Some groups of children could discuss and compare the illustrating styles of, say, Dick Bruna, Julie Vivas, Jeannie Baker and Marina McAllan. If the children decide to draw, challenge them to try different media, such as water paints or black line drawings. They might experiment with crayon or pencil rubbings for effective backgrounds, and consider whether particular colours are more appropriate for the text than others.



When children who lack confidence in their ability to draw seek help from others, make sure that the competent illustrators are not always illustrating. They too must complete some writing. Children should be able to seek advice from one another, but generally in the classroom setting each child should be working on his or her own book.

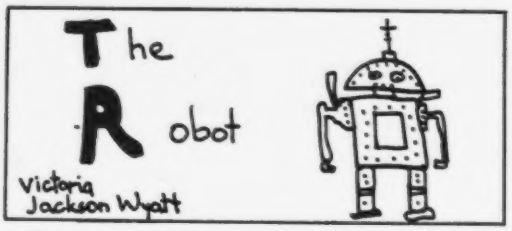
Teachers often ask, 'How long do you allow children to spend illustrating their books?' With children's first publications, we usually allow them to finish all artwork in school time. Nothing spurs a child on to complete more writing than a beautiful publication. After this first publication, we discuss with the children what arrangement they think would be fair for completing artwork. Most feel that three to four writing sessions is a fair allowance, and if the illustrations are not then complete, the children are happy to finish them at home or in free time at school.

Dedication and 'About the Author'

Will the authors dedicate their books to someone? When you are reading a book aloud to the children, take time to read and discuss the dedication. Do the same with the 'About the Author' section, noticing how it often includes a short biography, a list of other books published and a photograph. Encourage your authors to use these models and write a dedication and a note about themselves for their own publications.

Cover

The purpose of the cover design is to attract prospective readers. The cover should be eye-catching and invite attention. Discuss cover designs with the children; can they relate the design and the colours used to the theme of the book? When the cover is complete, book cloth over the spine and a covering of clear 'Contact' will give the book a professional appearance.



Publishing equipment

Ideally each classroom should have its own publishing corner or trolley. However, if finances do not allow this, three or four classrooms on one level could share a publishing trolley. The corner or trolley should hold the following equipment:

- Pre-cut pages and matching covers
- Writing implements: biros, fine felt pens, caligraphy pens
- Drawing materials: crayons, pastels, textas (including highlighters, gold and silver)
- Fixative spray
- Lettering books
- Scissors
- Book cloth
- Staplers
- Clear 'Contact'.

Remember — when books are being published the authors are going public. They want others to see their books. Care must be taken in their presentation, and good quality paper, cardboard and drawing implements should always be available for the children's use.

Post publishing

When a book is published the author presents it to the whole grade. The published book then joins the classroom display. At sustained quiet reading times children may choose to read these class publications, and they can be catalogued for borrowing as per the library system. Each year, when each class member has published, a book launching can be held and parents and friends invited. This is a splendid way to involve parents in the class writing program.

How often?

When children begin a personal writing program, you might let them all publish a piece rather quickly. Having a book published motivates them to do more writing better than almost anything else. However, after this initial publication the publishing program can slow down. The children can be encouraged to write several pieces and select one for publication.

Publication of Big Books

The class publishing program should include co-operative publication of Big Books, following on the group composition of stories. These texts begin as wall stories and may be factual reports, imaginative stories or stories innovated upon other authors' structures. For instance, some twelve-year-olds studying early Australian history innovated on Bill Martin's 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear' and compiled the following text:

Governor Phillip, Governor Phillip
Who do you see?
I see an aborigine
Looking at me.
Aborigine, aborigine,
Who do you see?
I see a convict
Looking at me.
Convict, convict
Who do you see?
I see Ben Hall
Looking at me.
Ben Hall, Ben Hall
Who do you see?
I see Captain Moonlite
Looking at me.
Captain Moonlite, Captain Moonlite
Who do you see?
I see a policeman
Shooting at me.
Policeman, policeman
Who do you see?
I see Ned Kelly
Hanging from a tree.

The use of wall stories can be as valuable with twelve-year-olds as with five-year-olds. The teacher acts as scribe, using large sheets of paper taped to the wall, and models writing behaviour for the children. In this real composing situation you can demonstrate how to use several beginnings if finding a start proves difficult, how to use arrows to show movement of text, how to try out the spelling of words if you are uncertain, and so on.

At the actual publishing stage you can show how to paginate, how to consider the placement of text on a page and the selection of key words for highlighting, and how to choose between types of illustration.

Finally...

A class publishing program certainly inspires children to write and to read. But when one is undertaken, it is important that children be involved at all stages. Writing and drawing implements, paper and cardboard must be of good quality so that the finished product can look good.

Bear in mind too that writing to publish is just one purpose for writing. In the wider class writing program do try to involve the children in writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. After all, much of our writing is one draft writing: not **all** writing has to look good.

The page overleaf is designed to be photocopied and given to children. The variety of typefaces should suggest some ideas for hand lettering.

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PUBLISHING DECISIONS

Lorraine Wilson

PLACEMENT OF PRINT
Will you place your print on every page or on every second page?
Will you write across the page or place your print in blocks?
PRINT
Which print style will you use?
Which writing implement? (Try not to use pencil.)
Are there key words which you will highlight ?
angry
ILLUSTRATIONS
Will you draw or use collage or make pop-up illustrations?
If you draw, will you use black and white line drawings or coloured pencils or paint or texta?
Will you try some crayon rubbing backgrounds?
DEDICATION
Will you dedicate your book to someone?
If so, who?
Write your dedication on the title page.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Real books often include a few sentences about the author. Could you include a few sentences about yourself? Tell about your other publications. You might include a photo of yourself.
COVER
How will you design your cover? Remember, your cover must be eye-catching. It should give your name as well as the title.